

DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Meeting of the State Advisory Council on Students with Special Needs

**Embassy Suites, North
Indianapolis, Indiana
March 19, 1999**

Interpreters

Becky Noller and Catherine Huston

Members in Attendance

Brett Bollinger, Carolyn Heier, Edward Kasamis, Elaine Scaife, David Schmidt, Julie Swaim, Mary Ramos, Kathy Wodicka, Bob Marra, Jeanine Calabria, Janet Corson, Becky Kirk, Cathlene Hardy-Hansen, Marcia Johnson, Rose Black, Deborah Winchester, and Maureen Greer.

Members Absent

Liam Grimley and Jackie Pitman.

Division Staff Members in Attendance

Becky Bowman, Cindy Conway, Sally Cook, and Sharon Knoth.

Others in Attendance

a.m. Janet McShurley, Director Delaware/Blackford Special Education; Philip Wray, Randolph Central; Debbie Feick, Delaware/Blackford Special Education; Phil Dubbs, Superintendent, Randolph Southern; Donna McGuire, Liberty-Perry School Corporation; Richard Amick, Superintendent, Liberty-Perry School Corporation; J. Bret Lewis, Superintendent, Kankakee Valley Schools; Dave Chastain, Director, Greater Randolph Interlocal; and Maria Sells, Director, Indiana Department of Correction.

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. Mrs. Wodicka asked that the members introduce themselves for the benefit of our guests.

Approval of Minutes from January meeting

David Schmidt moved to approve the minutes as mailed. Seconded by Maureen Greer. Motion carried.

Liberty Perry and Delaware/Blackford Special Education Cooperative Presentation

S. Cook gave an introductory overview for the Council. J. McShurley presented to the Council on behalf of Delaware/Blackford Special Education Cooperative. She indicated that the Superintendents who will remain in the Cooperative believe they are able to pick up the remaining costs should the split occur. D. Schmidt complimented Janet on the chart she provided to the Council. He indicated that it is very helpful. B. Bollinger asked about ChildCount

numbers. He indicated there to be a discrepancy between the two pages and ChildCount numbers. S. Cook indicated at the break they would clarify the numbers.

R. Amick, Superintendent, presented to the Council on behalf of Liberty-Perry. Over the past few years he and D. McGuire, his local Director, began moving more of their students back to Liberty-Perry. They had some students who would spend lengthy amounts of time on the bus and they wanted to reduce that travel time. He shared a chart of staff projections with the Council. Over the past few weeks he and D. McGuire have been meeting with students and families to discuss and share information on this proposed restructuring. E. Kasamis asked about the 8 students who are currently being served in Delaware/Blackford and how many "exceptionality areas" are comprised with those 8 students. There are 7 different categories or classes in which those 8 students are enrolled. R. Amick indicated that they have plenty of classroom space in which to bring these students home to Liberty-Perry. M. Greer asked about page 7 of the document (pertaining to early childhood education). Why are they moving students from an integrated preschool setting to a segregated preschool setting? D. Chastain indicated that since he was hired, this is an area in which he has been devoting quite a bit of time. This is not a segregated program, each class has 10 "slots" available to students in the community who have the same approximate developmental level. A discussion of preschool services ensued. B. Bollinger asked about the projected staff allocations for the 2000/01 school year. A discussion on numbers and licensure areas for staff ensued. B. Kirk asked for an explanation regarding students with severe disabilities. They will be in a age-appropriate building in Liberty-Perry and then mainstreamed as deemed appropriate by the case conference committee. R. Black asked whether Liberty-Perry currently had high school level special needs pupils mainstreamed for social studies, health, etc. R. Amick indicated that "yes" his staff currently serves students in the home district. R. Amick complimented J. McShurley on the fine job she has done since being hired by Delaware County. Philip Wray indicated that either D. McGuire or R. Amick has attended all of the board meetings for Greater Randolph this past year as a non-voting member, but they have been involved in all discussions and plans which have been made this past year.

D. Chastain presented on behalf of the Greater Randolph Interlocal Cooperative. S. Cook pointed out to the Council that she has caught a typographical error in the numbers at Tab 5 in the handouts.

K. Wodicka thanked everyone for their presentations and information. The Council will be discussing this further this afternoon.

The Council took a brief break. The meeting was re-convened at 11:00 a.m.

Guests in Attendance

2nd a.m. Session: Jo Willer, Director of Special Education, Jay Schools; David Shaw, Director of Special Education, North Montgomery Schools; Ted Newell, Assistant Superintendent, North Montgomery Schools; R. Dennis Renshaw, Superintendent, North Montgomery Schools; Kathy Evans, Parent; Gayle R. Lough, Parent; Scott Volivia, Parent; Paula Overfelt, Parent; Cheryl Harshman, Director of Special Education, West Central Indiana Special Services Cooperative; Bob Baker, Superintendent, Southeast Fountain Schools; Craig Glenn, Superintendent, Crawfordsville Community Schools; Janet Lewis-Anderson, West Central Indiana Special

Services Cooperative; J. Bret Lewis, Superintendent, Kankakee Valley; Dick VanArsdel, School Board President, North Montgomery Schools, and Maria Selles, Department of Correction..

North Montgomery/West Central Indiana Special Services Cooperative Restructuring
R.D. Renshaw presented to the Council on behalf of North Montgomery Schools. He explained to the Council the process which his Corporation has been using to prepare for the proposed restructuring of special services for North Montgomery Schools. D. Shaw and J. Willer continued with North Montgomery's presentation to the Council. A document was shared with the Council which delineated counts for each school and staffing certification. All direct service areas except VI are covered by staff currently employed by North Montgomery.

B. Kirk asked for information on the surveys and on provision of services to students in the district. There were about 25 parents who responded to the survey. R.D. Renshaw pointed out that in addition to the survey, there was informal gathering of information from families in the district as well as a parent meeting.

M. Greer asked for clarification on the early childhood programs in the district. D. Shaw expanded on the description of the current preschool program in North Montgomery. M. Greer asked how many early childhood students exceeded the recommended 12 _ hours of early childhood services. D. Shaw indicated that they do have a student who's family has elected to provide increased services. M. Greer asked about those students who will turn 3-years old during the summer months. How will these students be served? At this point North Montgomery has not been involved in the transition planning for early childhood. J. Swaim asked whether the case conference committee would occur in May so that the family knows where the student will be in September, or do they wait until September? These are questions that are legitimate, yet they have not been dealt with prior to this time. J. Willer indicated that should the Council approve of this restructuring, this is an area which will be addressed in the further/concrete planning which will occur.

E. Kasamis asked whether the School Board approves the district to go forward when applying for Improving America Schools or Title I grants? R.D. Renshaw indicated that "No", but those grants have specific forms and outlines which must be followed. A discussion of the linear process for moving forward or restructuring occurred.

D. Schmidt asked how the District plans to program for Transition Services and Vocational Services for students with disabilities. D. Shaw indicated that there is a VocEd program currently at the high school. There is no transition coordinator currently employed in North Montgomer however, C. Harshman indicated that there is a team through the Cooperative which looks at transition services for students in the Cooperative.

K. Wodicka asked for clarification on the "priorities and goals" for next year. D. Shaw indicated that they are already moving forward on some of these, but definitely intend to continue to move forward.

B. Marra asked for clarification on the "self contained" proposal in their documentation. J. Willer indicated that at this time there are some MoMH (1 at each elementary school [3 altogether]) and

MH students. B. Marra asked for clarification on the students who are autistic. D. Shaw indicated that they are in a general education setting with Multi-Categorical services being provided by an LD teacher. Training has been provided to these teachers (MoMH, SLP, LD) through ISDD. Traumatic Brain Injury students are also served in general education and are provided consultation through two LD teachers. D. Shaw indicated that they have not received assistive technology training through the PATINS Project but they have used Vicki Hershman through the PATINS Project to assist with their technology coordinator. C. Harshman indicated that there is a cooperative-based AT Team which has been trained by the PATINS Project and she clarified the AUT Team for the Cooperative. OT, PT, and Audiological services will be contracted for by North Montgomery Schools.

R. Black asked for clarification on transition services. D. Shaw indicated that they have a teacher at the HS who works with the students through the transition process. When asked about SPMH students, D. Shaw indicated at this point they do not have any.

D. Schmidt asked about case conference coordinators. D. Shaw indicated that at this point he is the one who chairs all case conferences, but that they intend for principals to assume this role in the future. J. Callabria asked whether all case conference coordinators are trained? D. Schmidt indicated that Article 7 requires such training. C. Harshman indicated that the Cooperative currently provides such inservice training to case conference coordinators.

C. Heier asked for clarification on the fiscal allocation listed in the proposal. R.D. Renshaw indicated that there will be an increase in staff (a director of special education and a school psychologist) and administrative costs should this proposal be approved. He believes the costs are sufficient but no one will know exactly until they get further into the process. C. Heier asked about transportation costs. R.D. Renshaw indicated that the \$220,000 is just general fund they currently provide their own transportation and will continue to do so. E. Kasamis asked about staff which will be hired - a director, a school psychologist and how much salaries for these positions will cost the district. They will be new costs - new dollars out of the \$220,000.

C. Harshman spoke to the Council on behalf of West Central Indiana Special Services Cooperative. She referred the Council to Section D in the handouts provided. There are two ways to restructure a cooperative - physically and then by services. She provided the Council with a description of the roles of consultants for the Cooperative. Although PT services are contracted with separately, the same person is used by all corporations in the district except North Montgomery. North Montgomery uses a different person. This is slightly different than with OT services. WCISS has an OT and a COTA employed by the Cooperative who work with all nine corporations. The caseload for the PT was not available from C. Harshman. WCISS has an early childhood coordinator who assists with the transition from Part C to preschool as well as from preschool to kindergarten. There are numerous services which are provided for by the Cooperative.

C. Harshman indicated that Sections H, I, and J provide an overview of how the remaining corporations will be effected should North Montgomery withdraw from the Cooperative. B. Bollinger asked about the budget projections. C. Harshman indicated that for some of the smaller

corporations this would be a significant impact. It ranges from \$3,000 to \$31,000 for the districts (reducing one employee in each district).

Behavioral concerns for students are being addressed through a school-based approach with training provided by WCISS. This is for all students. D. Schmidt asked who provides the Functional Behavioral Assessments in North Montgomery. D. Shaw indicated that they have attended the workshop provided by the Cooperative (he and 3 other teachers). Currently, causal hearings are conducted by C. Harshman as that is what is required in Article 7.

B. Kirk asked whether there are students currently enrolled in North Montgomery who are not NM students and would therefore have to be moved to another district to receive services. D. Shaw indicated that there are 2 students who would fall into this category and they would continue to serve these students regardless of what happens with this restructuring. They will be permitted to complete their program at North Montgomery.

B. Bollinger asked about the reduction of one employee - could this be either a consultant and/or the unfilled psych position? Yes. But the Board chose to just reduce the currently unfilled psych position.

K. Wodicka thanked Mrs. Harshman for her presentation. Mrs. Kathy Evans introduced the other parents who came with her today. They are concerned about whether services will be available to their children should this restructuring occur. B. Kirk asked how many of the four parents in attendance received a questionnaire. Two of the four in attendance received a questionnaire.

Mr. Gayle Lough spoke to the Council. He is concerned that there has not been a lot of parent involvement regarding this process. In 2 years there have been 2 meetings and they weren't to involve them - they were to tell them what the district was going to do. He is in favor of pulling out but he has some concerns regarding unanswered questions from today. He is quite pleased with the teachers his son has at North Montgomery - it is the unknown that he is concerned about. J. Corson asked what services he feels his son would not receive should the restructuring occur. He is worried about the amount of OT and PT services as he already believes it is quite small and should these be reduced he would not be pleased. He also worries about property taxes increasing as a result of this.

Mr. Scott Volivia brought concerns to the Council about who do they turn to if they have a problem? At this time they go to the Cooperative - if that is taken away from them, who would they turn to? If there is support for this, where are those parents? J. Callabria asked whether the parents as a whole look to the Cooperative as a support system? Mr. Volivia indicated that yes, but he would hate to speak for other families. They do not know one-another (the parents don't). He was at the meeting last year, but not the one this past Monday night.

R.D. Renshaw addressed the Council regarding the communication concerns. You cannot put an exact dollar amount on these issues. North Montgomery does not want an adversarial relationship any more than anyone in this room does.

Bob Baker, Superintendent from Southeast Fountain School Corporation addressed the Council. This separation process has been going on for well over a year and there have been hard feelings amongst all involved. He asked that there be some closure to this issue today. By giving a decision today it will allow some time for all of them to heal. There are many issues which need to be decided by all of the corporations involved.

J. Willer addressed the parents in the room. She wanted to explain that a year ago, the teachers and parents from Jay were equally as concerned as they are today. She would like for them to know that if you were to speak with her parents today they would tell you that services have actually increased since their restructuring.

The Council took a break for lunch.

Liberty Perry/Delaware/Blackford

D. Schmidt moved that we approve Liberty Perry's request to remove from Delaware/Blackford and move in with Greater Randolph. Seconded by J. Calabria. Approved 16. Opposed 0. Motion Carried.

North Montgomery/West Central Indiana

E. Kasamis moved that the request from North Montgomery (to withdraw from West Central Indiana Special Services Cooperative) be denied based on the materials and the presentation of this morning. Seconded by D. Schmidt.

Discussion

B. Bollinger brought the Council back to what we told them at last year's meeting. Did we tell them what we wanted them to do in order for us to approve the withdrawal. D. Winchester spoke of the Assistive Technology question. It was troublesome that AT had not been addressed. She was also concerned about the SPMH personnel issue. She would like some specifics that speak to if "x" happens then "y" would occur. A further concern the lack of communication to families in the district (the low numbers of families contacted).

M. Greer brought up her concerns of "reverse mainstreaming". The community vs. center-based early childhood concept was not adequately addressed. Autism, Assistive Technology, and Transition issues were not planned for - even though they are required areas by law.

J. Swaim indicated that the Council had the same concerns last year with Jay County (regarding lack of parental involvement with the surveys). She is concerned that the Cooperative is set out here to be the good guy and the district the bad guy when, in reality, the Cooperative is often the bad guy (why else would the district want out)? As a parent in a Cooperative she doesn't know from year to year who her teacher will be.

J. Corson spoke to the fact that the "process" isn't very clear. Obviously it can be done - but there could be a better job for school corporations wishing to restructure. Was it that they didn't pick up on it - or was it that we did not provide enough structure for them? Ten percent of your parents isn't a lot, but hind sight is 20/20. She is concerned with the consultative model from the Cooperative. She believes that North Montgomery's intentions were good.

E. Kasamis complimented S. Cook on the materials they received.

B. Kirk indicated that she has mixed feelings on this issue as well. She would like to see home school corporations provide services in their districts. She has her share of concerns regarding the lack of communication with families in the district. Effecting change is not always easy. The lack of training did bring up concerns for her.

J. Calabria concurred with Becky's thoughts. But she was really concerned about the lack of professional understanding about what a school corporation must provide in order to be in compliance.

C. Hardy-Hansen spoke to the philosophical reasons for separating. J. Swaim indicated that she thought it was the consultative model. If they needed someone they weren't always available. Although they answered the questions, there was no actual plan of action delineated.

M. Johnson indicated that communication between the school and the Cooperative, between the school and the families, and between the School Board and the community is lacking. They have a part of a plan, but not a complete plan. Although they have the fiscal resources to have everything, they haven't planned enough to actually be ready to implement.

K. Wodicka concurred with the concerns over lack of communication with families in the district.

D. Schmidt spoke to the good intentions of the district. There may be some things of which we are not completely aware. There is a lack of "systems change" process in place. How do we get from "here" to "there"? is not adequately addressed. A Comprehensive Plan merely provides assurance statements - not a commitment.

E. Kasamis called for the question. J. Corson objected to the Call. Discussion continues.

J. Corson concurred with the discussion that just because they have asked us to make a decision today does not mean that we have to. We can ask for very specific items with a concrete deadline - we can do that as well. A concern arose that if we ask for additional items, they won't have time to meet the deadlines for Reduction in Force. B. Marra spoke to the issue that no, there would not be enough time. He would prefer that the Council make their recommendation to him today.

M. Greer called for the Question. Those in favor of denying them from leaving (13). Those opposed (0). Absentia (1)

Other Business

B. Marra informed the Council that they have the Final Regulations in front of them because S. Knoth came into the office early on Friday March 12.

We have two meetings already scheduled: April 16 and May 21. B. Marra would like to keep those dates confirmed - and he would like to bring a DRAFT of Article 7 to the May 21 meeting. At the May meeting we will need to establish a means for continuing our discussions over the

summer. We would then have a meeting in late August with hopes of getting a DRAFT to the State Board for the September meeting. He would like for the Council to come to the April meeting with an agenda of which items they would like to see changed in Article 7.

J. Corson made a motion stating that if Bob's decision is to deny North Montgomery, he be very specific as to why he made that decision. Seconded by B. Bollinger. Motion carried.

D. Schmidt moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by C. Heier. Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.